



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1941.

### COOPERATION HELPING TO SOLVE PROBLEM OF BOMBS AND WILDLIFE

In a meeting of bombs and wildlife there can be no winner, but a way is being found by the Fish and Wildlife Service to make it less destructive to the Nation's birds and animals.

Reporting to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, the Service said today that the military forces are cooperating in protecting the essential needs of wildlife when bombing areas, machine gun ranges, and maneuver grounds are established.

Scientists of the Fish and Wildlife Service are given the opportunity of checking all national defense plans which have a bearing on wildlife resources and their conservation, Albert M. Day, an official of the Service, already having been designated as a liaison officer to keep informed of defense activities which would seem damaging to fish or wildlife. This designation by Secretary Ickes followed a request made by President Roosevelt.

Where defense plans involve good wildlife breeding or nesting grounds, or threaten destruction to large numbers of a species, the Service offers alternatives and usually an agreement is reached which carries out the defense purposes without serious destruction of wildlife, Mr. Day explained.

One of the more recent agreements made room for a bombing area, ground machine gun range, and landing field upon part of a waterfowl refuge in Oklahoma. Reserving flooded areas made suitable as a wildlife sanctuary by creation of an artificial lake, the Fish and Wildlife Service turned over to the Army the portion of the refuge which is of little use to waterfowl. In turn, the air force agreed that airplanes will fly away from the lake after firing during bombing and other practices.

This give and take cooperation has enabled the Fish and Wildlife Service to place lands of very low value as homes for wild mammals and birds at the disposal of the Army. On the other hand, in several instances the Army has modified its plans when the Service pointed out the extent of destruction which would be caused to wildlife.

Such a case was that involving the watershed of the Wood River in Alaska. Bombing practice plans of the Army for the key air base near Fairbanks included use of the Tanana River valley. Wood River is a tributary of the Tanana. Although along the Tanana itself there is no great objection to bombing, along the Wood River a fine herd of caribou and great numbers of fur bearing animals are found. The Army willingly excluded the Wood River from bombing when advised of the situation.

"It is fitting that wildlife be subordinated to the defense needs of the Nation," Mr. Day said, "and there are many instances where wildlife conservation activities can help strengthen national defense preparations. At the same time, if defense activities can be conducted with a minimum of damage to the valuable wildlife populations, it is essential that we plan courses of action to bring about this result.

"The ready cooperation of Army and Navy officers to suggestions made by our biologists has made it possible to solve most of the problems with relatively little difficulty."